FALL 2020 : VOLUME 1 : ISSUE 3

# Ṣirāṭ Link

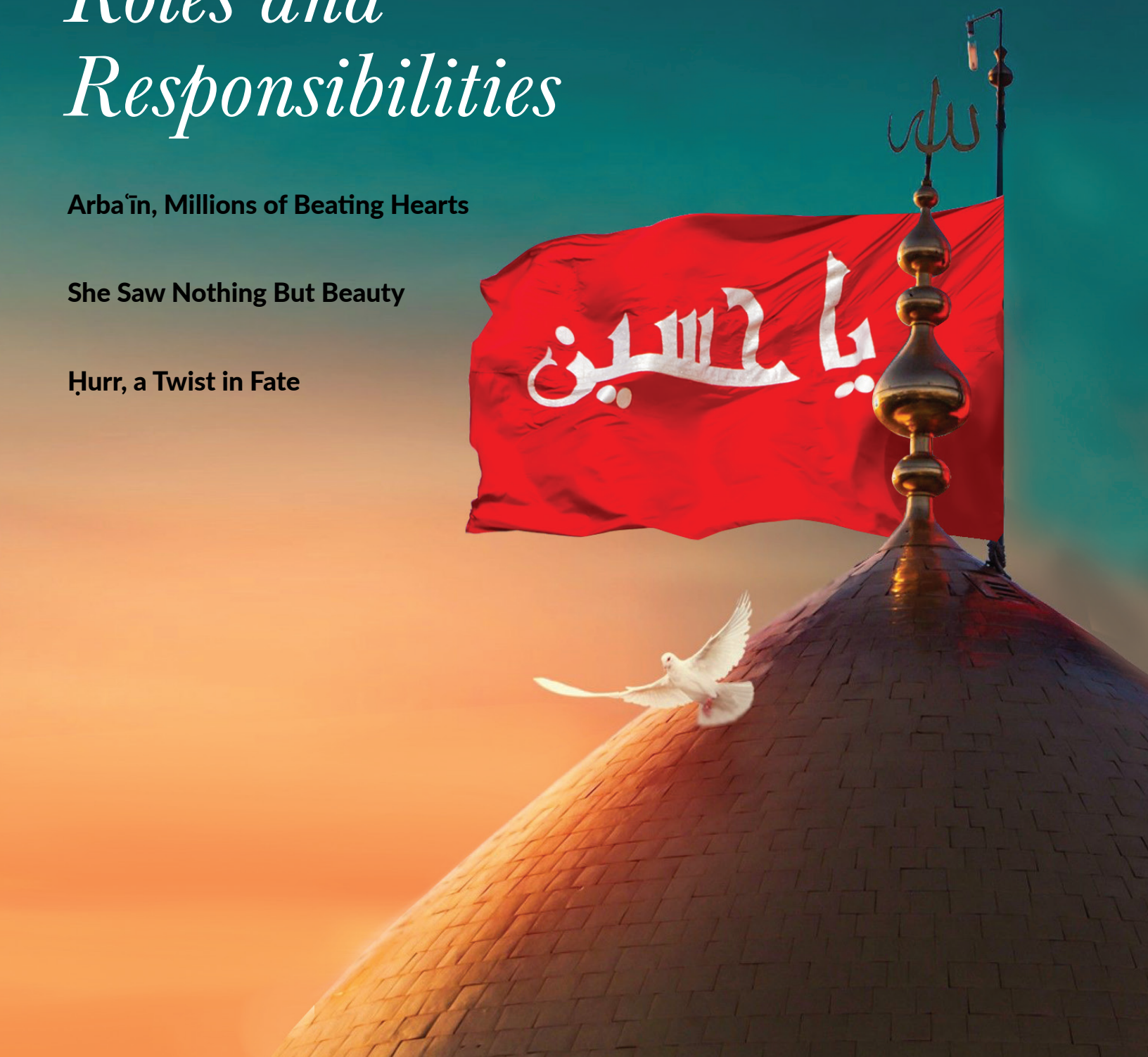
*A path for connecting with Allah, others, and one's self*

## *Roles and Responsibilities*

**Arbaʿīn, Millions of Beating Hearts**

**She Saw Nothing But Beauty**

**Ḥurr, a Twist in Fate**



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## Letter from

*Salāmun ʿalaykum*

The Noble Prophet (ṣ) has said, *"Ḥusayn is from me, and I am from Ḥusayn."*
My sincerest condolences to the Imām of our time, Imām al-Mahdī (ʿaj), and the Muslim Ummah on the upcoming commemoration of Imām Ḥusayn's (ʿa) *shahādah* (martyrdom).

ʿĀshūrā' rejuvenates the ummah, allowing us to wake up from the sleep of *ghaflah* (heedlessness) that we may have slipped into and reminding us of the true purpose of our creation. The Maʿṣūmīn (ʿa) are the intermediary between Allah and His creation. They are the boats of rescue, but the boat of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) is vaster and faster. So, take advantage of this time, and use it to move closer to Allah.

As we prepare our souls for this mourning season, in order to become the righteous ambassadors of Allah, the Noble Prophet (ṣ), and the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa), we must specifically fortify two qualities within ourselves:


**Ṣirāṭ Link**
A 2nd Chance Books Publication


وَيُطْعِمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا

**For the love of Him, they feed the needy, the orphan, and the prisoner.**

**(Noble Qur'ān 76:8)**

2nd Chance Books is a non-profit organization that was founded in order to assist incarcerated Muslims by providing them with educational materials, a support system, and tools for rehabilitation, thus responding to their numerous questions about Islam, resulting in a more thorough understanding of the religoin. So far, they have distributed over 12,000 books to inmates across the country.

Among 2nd Chance's most recent initiatives is Ṣirāṭ Link, a quarterly magazine. The title Ṣirāṭ Link is inspired by the Arabic term Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm, which means the right path. Therefore, we pray that this magazine is a means of guidance to the right path and a connection to Allah, the broader community, and oneself. Inshā'Allāh it can serve as an opportunity for growing one's faith through education.

This magazine will be under the guidance and oversight of Moulana Nabi Raza Mir Abidi, Resident ʿĀlim of SABA Center, and several other scholars and experts.

# MOULANA ABIDI

**1. Strengthening our love of Allah and the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa):** The path to this is *maʿrifah*—deep insight and understanding of knowledge. Take advantage of any discussions on Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) this month. Build on the capital of your *maʿrifah*, and let it root deeply within your souls so that it may blossom into deep, divine, and true love.

**2. Developing obedience to Allah and the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa):** We should aim to follow the laws of Allah and not transgress any limits. For whatever wrongdoings we have done, we can always repent and turn back to Him.
Indeed, these two qualities complement one another; one is incomplete without the other. In order to achieve success, both qualities must be strengthened.

As Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir (ʿa) has narrated:

يا جابر من اطاع الله و احبنا فهو ولينا و من عصى الله لم ينفعه حبنا
*O Jābir! Anyone who obeys Allah and is a lover of the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) is our true believer, and if one disobeys Allah and is a lover of the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa), then that love does not have true benefit.*

Therefore, with these two capitals, we can perform our responsibilities and duties, inshāʾAllāh. Indeed, true spirituality and true perfection is rooted in performing those two.
Let us remember all the oppressed around the world and keep them in our supplications. After all, they are our brothers and sisters; we are one ummah, and there are no words to describe how our brothers and sisters are suffering. True peace will only come with our beloved Imām al-Mahdī (ʿaj), so in these nights, sincerely pray for his reappearance and to be included amongst his special companions.

With Duʿās,
*Sayyid Nabi Raza Abidi*

## SIGNIFICANT DAYS OF SHAHR MUḤARRAM

**2nd** Imām Ḥusayn and caravan arrive in Karbala
*August 22nd, 2020

**9th** Eve of ʿĀshūrā
*August 29th, 2020ʾ

**10th** Day of ʿĀshūrāʾ: death anniversary of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), male family members, and most male companions
*August 30th, 2020

**25th** Death anniversary of Imām ʿAlī as-Sajjād (ʿa)
*September 14th, 2020

## SIGNIFICANT DAYS OF SHAHR ṢAFAR

**7th** Birth anniversary of Imām Mūsa al-Kāẓim (ʿa)
*September 25th, 2020

**20th** Arbaʿīn: 40th day after the martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn
*October 8th, 2020

**28th** Death anniversary of Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ)
October 16th, 2020

**28th** Death anniversary of Imām Ḥasan (ʿa)
October 16th, 2020

**29th** Death anniversary of Imām ʿAlī ar-Riḍā (ʿa)
October 17th, 2020

## SIGNIFICANT DAYS OF SHAHR RABĪʿ AL-AWWAL

**8th** Death Anniversary of Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī (ʿa)
*October 25th, 2020

**17th** Birth Anniversary of Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) and Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq (ʿa)
*November 3rd, 2020

*Please note the above Gregorian dates are only estimates. The dates are subject to change based on moon sighting, upon which the Islamic calendar is based.*

# *She Saw Nothing But Beauty*

By Sabika Mithani

In the aftermath of the tragedy of ʻĀshūrāʾ, the caravan of Karbala has taken off, and the enemies have mercilessly taken the family of the Prophet, tied them, and imprisoned them. At first look, it is made to seem as though they have been defeated, but a closer look at their illuminated faces shows nothing but victory. The Holy Household (ʿa) has inherited the lion heart of Imām ʿAlī (ʿa), especially his daughter, Sayyidah Zaynab (ʿa).

One of the most memorable utterances of the tragedy of Karbala is a line of Sayyidah Zaynab (ʿa) where she said, "I did not see anything but beauty." This was not a front Sayyidah Zaynab (ʿa) put on for the enemies; her strength lay in a reservoir provided by Allah. As Karbala was a responsibility that had to be met, it was a responsibility done in response to Allah's order; thus, it was beautiful.

For us to come to a greater appreciation of what she said, let us look at the Qurʾān. The word beauty in the Qurʾān is zīnah.

When we look deeper for the definition of beauty or zīnah, we see that the Qurʾān introduces four types of beauty:

1. External beauty
2. Tested beauty
3. Punished beauty
4. Spiritual beauty

Through these four types of beauty, one can come closer to or fall further away from Allah. They act as a test for the believers.

The first amongst them is external beauty, the beauty that we can see and witness with our physical sight and touch. In the days of the Prophet (ṣ), there were people who embraced Islam in a way that did not match with the commandments of Allah. They would not take care of themselves; instead, they would seclude themselves in the mountains to worship and avoid marriage and other responsibilities, claiming that they were shunning the dunyā, the lowly world. They believed, falsely, that this is what Allah wanted. It was then that the following verse was revealed; this is the external beauty that Allah commands the Prophet (ṣ) to ask about:
*"Say [O Prophet], 'Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah?'"* (Noble Qurʾān, 7:32)

No, Allah has not forbidden beauty. Instead, Islam encourages an external beauty so long as it is within the framework of Allah's commandments.

The second beauty that we are tested with is addressed in the book of Allah as well. In the Noble Qurʾān, we see that Allah says: *"Say, 'If your fathers and your sons, your brethren, your spouses, and your kinsfolk, the possessions that you have acquired, the business you fear may suffer, and the dwellings you are fond of, are dearer to you than Allah and His Apostle and to struggling in His way, then wait until Allah issues His edict, and Allah does not guide the transgressing lot.'"* (9:24)

The most important things in our lives that we beautify ourselves with are mentioned here–our families, wealth, business, homes, and possessions. The test of this beauty comes when we are faced with the decision of choosing these things or adhering to Allah's commands. The test lies in our obedience or lack thereof.

The third type of beauty is the one that believers must avoid, a beauty that is punishable. Unlike the previous two, this one warrants punishment from Allah. In the Noble Qurʾān, Allah poses a question for reflection:

*"Is, then, he to whom the evil of his own doings has been made alluring so he considers it good [like one rightly guided]?"* (35:8)

This is truly a troubling predicament to find oneself in. It is when an action is truly evil and ugly, but is falsely believed to be beautiful. This is a tactic of Shayṭān, who appears to make forbidden actions beautiful. It is when one claims a gathering of gossip is actually a discussion of politics, when the bribery taken was actually a gift, and where the interest was actually a business transaction. These actions are all types of a beauty that aren't actually beautiful, but may appear so to the sinner.
Lastly, spiritual beauty is the type of beauty Sayyidah Zaynab (ʿa) was referring to in her famous sentence, *"I saw nothing but beauty."*

Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) has said, *"Internal beauty is much more beautiful than external beauty."*

Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) has said, *"Internal beauty is much more beautiful than external beauty."*
What Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) meant is that the internal beauty that emanates from the soul, one that lifts us to spiritual heights, far outweighs the physical beauty that we see and witness. The spiritual essence and core of our actions, the intrinsic value that cannot be seen, is more weighty in the eyes of the Imām (ʿa).

We see that even the night after the heinous day of ʿĀshūrāʾ, Sayyidah Zaynab (ʿa) did not miss her night prayers (Ṣalāt ul-Layl). The internal beauty she exhibited then was her high level of faith—to worship Allah. Her love and affection for Him prevented her from being heedless of her prayers, even in the tumultuous situation she was facing.

Looking at the blood stained sands of Karbala, what was this spiritual beauty she saw? The beauty of such a tragedy revealed itself in the martyrs and those remaining living prisoners who exhibited faith (īmān), reliance on Allah (tawakkul), courage, and bravery. She saw the essence of what the tragedy of Karbala signified, and that is what led to her famous rebuttal to Yazīd, "I see nothing but beauty."

# A Safe Haven in Persecution

By Taymaz Tabrizi

It was the year 622 A.D when the Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) fled from Mecca, north to the city of Medina. As the Prophet (ṣ) had lost his sole patrons and protectors, most notably Abū Ṭālib (ʿa), he could no longer live in the city in light of the plots of the leaders of the Quraysh (the leading tribe of Mecca) to have him murdered. The Meccan leaders had tried many ways to discredit Islam and intimidate the Prophet into stopping the message of Allah. However, when their plots failed, they attempted to assassinate him. This triggered the Prophet's migration to a new and safer city.

The Prophet's (ṣ) move to Medina came to be known as the Ḥijrah (the Great Migration) which established the first year of the Muslim calendar. Medina had become his destination as some of the tribes of that city had heard about the Prophet's (ṣ) outstanding character, offering him refuge and protection in their city. In return, the Prophet (ṣ) would help them resolve some of the tribal disputes that had plagued the city for so long.

This event in the Prophet's (ṣ) life was significant as it teaches Muslims that they do not need to live in an area that poses a physical, mental, or spiritual danger to them.

Sometimes bravery is not resisting bad environments, but having the courage to move to a different place that can better help us grow as Muslims and serve Allah better. It also teaches us that we should give priority in being with people who will protect us and give us an opportunity to do good rather than simply hurting ourselves, especially in cases where there is not much hope.

The road to Medina was not an easy one. Notwithstanding the harsh climate of the desert, the Prophet's (ṣ) would-be assassins had followed him into the desert, but Allah thwarted them. For example, one would-be assassin, Surāqah bin Mālik, hunted the Prophet (ṣ) in order to collect a bounty that the Meccans had put on his life. Yet every time Surāqah would come close to the Prophet (ṣ), his horse would either flee or would flounder in the sand.

*The Prophet (ṣ) was welcomed to the city with crowds waving palm leaves and recitations of joy for his arrival.*

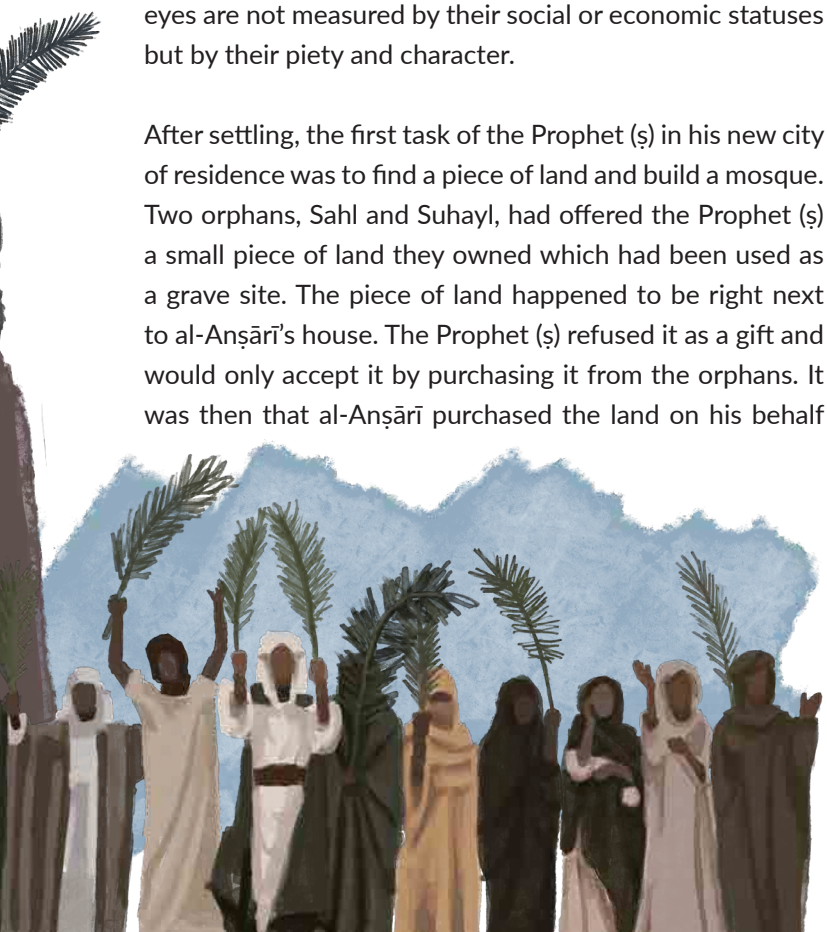
***Sometimes bravery is not resisting bad environments, but having the courage to move to a different place that can better help us grow as Muslims and serve Allah better. It also teaches us that we should give priority in being with people who will protect us and give us an opportunity to do good rather than simply hurting ourselves, especially in cases where there is not much hope.***

This story is significant as it teaches us that if Allah wills something, there is no force in existence that can thwart it or prevent it from happening. What we see as simple coincidences in life are often Allah's silent way of speaking to us and guiding us to salvation.

The Messenger of Allah (ṣ) eventually made it to Medina through the protection that his Lord gave him. Upon his arrival, many people competed to have the Prophet (ṣ) stay at their homes. However, the Prophet (ṣ) let his camel guide the way, agreeing to stay anywhere the camel would eventually settle.

His camel stopped at the home of a Medinan man named Abū Ayyub al-Anṣārī who was a person of ordinary and humble means. This shocked the residents of the city as they had expected the Prophet (ṣ) to settle with the rich and aristocratic elite of the city. People's value in God's eyes are not measured by their social or economic statuses but by their piety and character.

After settling, the first task of the Prophet (ṣ) in his new city of residence was to find a piece of land and build a mosque. Two orphans, Sahl and Suhayl, had offered the Prophet (ṣ) a small piece of land they owned which had been used as a grave site. The piece of land happened to be right next to al-Anṣārī's house. The Prophet (ṣ) refused it as a gift and would only accept it by purchasing it from the orphans. It was then that al-Anṣārī purchased the land on his behalf and the Prophet (ṣ) proceeded to build the Mosque with his bare hands.



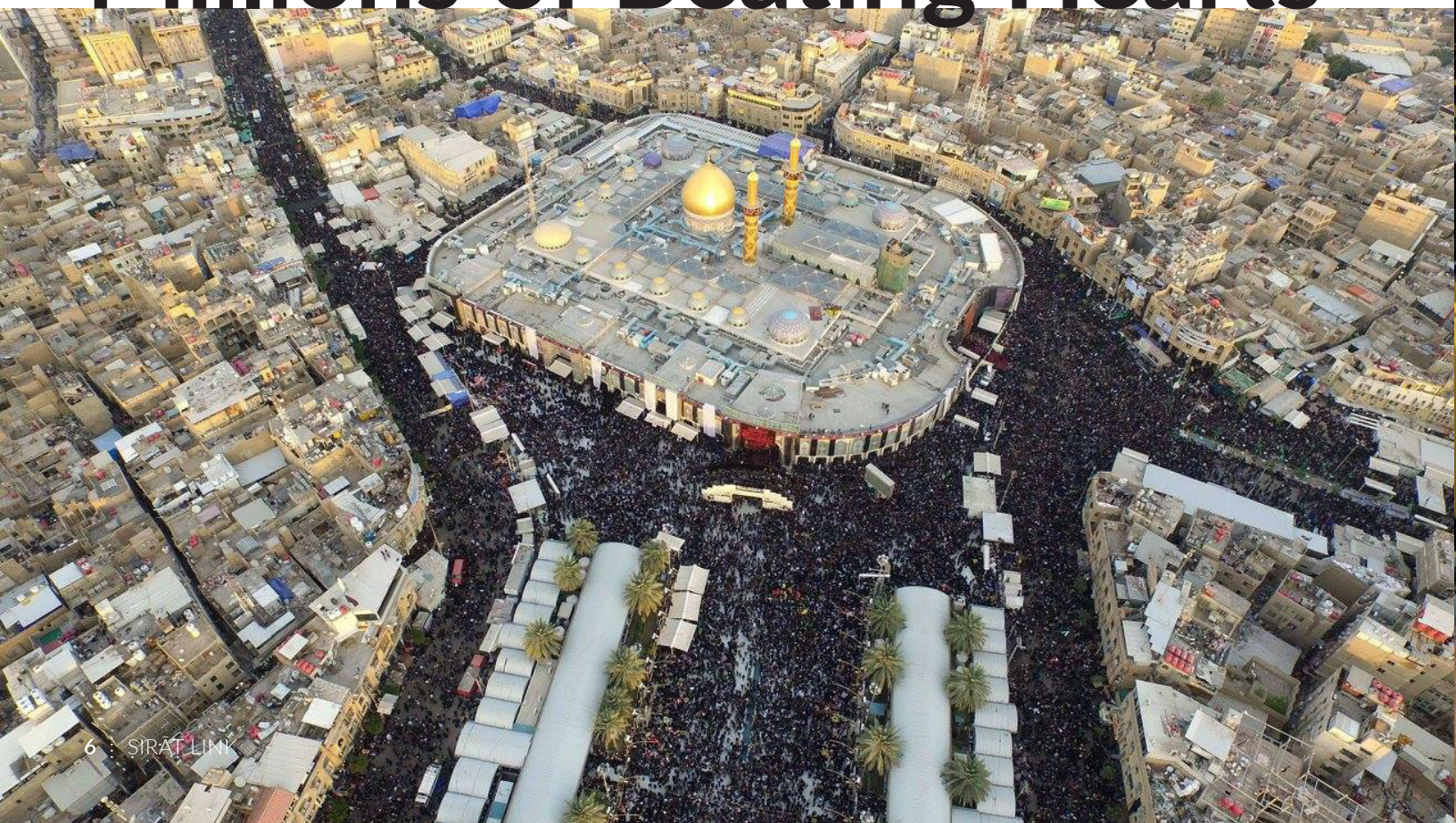
The mosque would be known as al-Masjid al-Nabawī (The Prophet's Mosque), one of the most sacred sites in Islam. Al-Masjid al-Nabawī is where Islam was established as a structured religious, social and cultural force. It was a place where legal and political disputes were settled, as well as where the poor and oppressed elements of society could find shelter and support. It eventually became the burial place of the Prophet (ṣ) which millions of people visit every year. As significant as al-Masjid al-Nabawī is, it is important to note that it partly owes its existence to the generosity and compassion of two marginalized orphans and a man of humble means.

This snippet of the Prophet's (ṣ) life is a great example of why we should not despair in life, instead having great hope in Allah and His plans. This world has not been left to chaos and anarchy. The world has a Lord and He is Allah and the result of everything stops with Him. The Prophet (ṣ) understood this very well. This is why when the world conspired against him, he did not let it bother him. He took responsibility for doing what he had to do, but in the end he left the results to Allah. This concept in Islam is known as tawakkūl (patient reliance on Allah). Islam teaches us that our actions can influence events but their ultimate outcomes are with Allah.

In this sense, the Prophet (ṣ) exerted action coupled with faith. He did what he had to do but did not attach his heart to results which is often the source of our pain and suffering in life. Effortless action was his way of flowing through the world like water, not resisting, but working with the power of the Cosmos. There was never an attempt to control, to resist, but simply flow, going forward with complete reliance on Allah.

# ARBA'ĪN

## Millions of Beating Hearts



SIRAT LINKS

# To be Spiritua

By Adeela Jaffery

After witnessing the brutal massacre of all the male members of the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) in Karbala, and most significantly, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), Sayyidah Zaynab (ʿa) was amongst the members of the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) taken as a captive. From the courts of Ibn Ziyād in Iraq and the tyrant ruler Yazīd in Syria, the Holy Household (ʿa) was tied up, pelted with stones, whipped, and humiliated.

History narrates that after going through these horrific experiences, Sayyida Zaynab (ʿa) and all the family members present, including the only surviving man and next Imām, Imām as-Sajjād (ʿa), were thrown in prison. Without a doubt, they faced the most extreme conditions one can possibly imagine. With little to no water, let alone food, these prisoners were left to die. But as Allah had planned, they not only survived but lived to tell the world about what conspired at Karbala and what they suffered on the road from Karbala to Syria.

Every time we hear renditions of Karbala, we imagine them to be in captivity—incapacitated and imprisoned while the tyrants roamed freely. But the teachings of Islam beg to differ. It was Yazīd who was captivated by power and wealth, a slave to his desires, so great that he ordered the killing of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), the grandson of Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ). Only when we look through the lens of Karbala does it become apparent that Sayyidah Zaynab (ʿa), Imām as-Sajjād (ʿa), and the pious family members of the Prophet (ṣ) were truly the ones who were free.

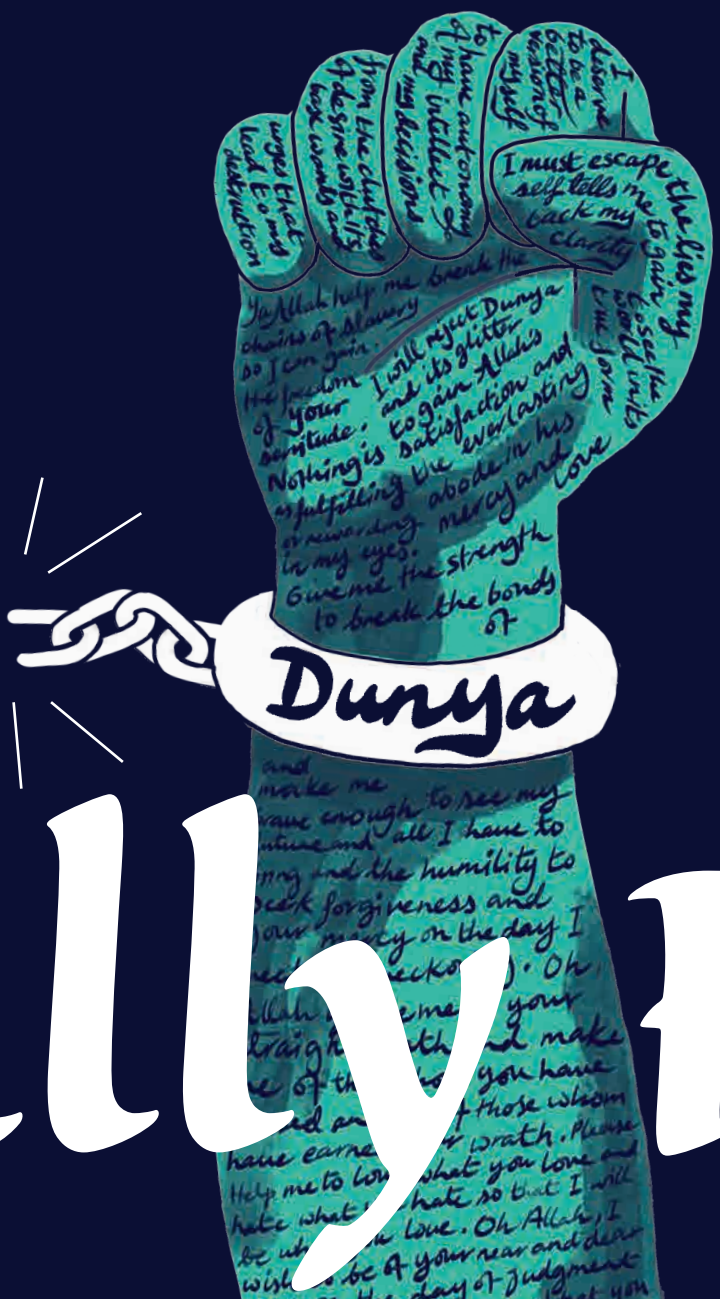
Despite what we may believe, freedom is not only material in nature. The Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) had a different type of freedom despite their physical limitations: spiritual freedom. They were not captives of their ego or their desires. Their souls were not behind bars even if their material bodies were.

The Noble Qurʾān states that we have been given life only to be tested. Each and every one of us, regardless of how little or plenty we have, is being tested. Allah has said in the Noble Qurʾān: *"You will surely be tested in your possessions and your souls, … but if you are patient and Godwary, that is indeed the steadiest of courses."* (3:186) Hence, when it comes to choosing between material or spiritual gain, which one should we be more content with: physical or spiritual freedom? If we choose the former while our souls are imprisoned, we transform our test to an eternal punishment. Our minds and souls become confined, unable to see the spiritual realities beyond this material world.

The Noble Qurʾān describes those who disbelieve, who have turned their hearts toward the material world, rather than the spiritual world, like those who are deaf, dumb, and blind. They have ears, yet do not listen, and eyes, yet do not see (2:171). Whether we are physically behind bars or

not, the key to eternity is to be spiritually free. What can we truly gain if we walk freely on Earth while our minds and souls are behind bars, running after whims and desires? Only a truly liberated mind can understand that it is not worth selling our souls for the petty gains of this temporal world.

To be truly liberated, we have to recognize our current spiritual state. To do that, we must pay attention to our actions in order to assess ourselves accurately. For example, indifference to disobeying Allah, to immoral actions, to injustice and oppression is one of the clearest signs that the soul is imprisoned—caged in the deepest, darkest dungeon. People can be walking freely with the most advanced technology in their hands, wearing designer clothing, and looking their best. But, are they truly free if their souls are not aligned with the principles Allah has set forth?




# lly Free

When we look at the freedom that Allah has decreed for us, we see that we are unconstrained by physical limitations. Even if we cannot roam freely on Earth, we understand and see the vastness Allah has blessed us with in relation to our souls. As Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) has said, *"You presume you are a small entity, but enfolded within you is the entire universe."* The expanse of a person's soul, to roam freely therein, becomes unlimited when connected to the Originator. Whoever tries can achieve this enlightenment, without discrimination. It doesn't matter whether you are rich or poor, of a particular race, color, or nationality. Rather, it is the recipient who chooses to reach for this enlightenment. If you want it badly enough, it can be yours. One must only be willing to sincerely try, and try hard enough.

After the events of Karbala, Imām ʿAlī as-Sajjād (ʿa) was unjustly imprisoned for a brief time, but it didn't affect his spiritual freedom even for a moment. The supplications he read throughout his life, particularly those mentioned in *Ṣaḥīfah al-Kāmilāt as-Sajjādiya*, testify to this. Being spiritually awake can then be defined as follows: when we realize that even if we have all the blessings and wealth this world has to offer, without Allah, there will always be something amiss. When the soul is aware of this, it will need something beyond the physical comforts to find contentment and peace.

It is undoubtedly hard to awaken the soul in today's world amid this slumbering masses, where there are countless free bodies yet few souls that are truly free. If we could see the real spiritual state of others, many of us would actually wish for solitary confinement. But the reward is only amplified when waking up spiritually in the midst of a sleeping society. It takes courage, bravery, and resilience to wake up and stand for the truth of one's creation and being, to stand against the grain of sin and worldly desires. However, this is not only what is needed from us, but required from all who are aspiring to be the companions of our awaited savior, the Mahdī (ʿaj), the who bring justice and freedom for all.

# Ḥurr: a Twist in Fate

By Aseel Machi

It goes without saying that surely at one point or another in history, Ḥurr was clearly a foe and an enemy to the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) and the Imām of his time, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). His role in the suffering of the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa) at Karbala is tantamount to their weakness and eventual death sentence for the remainder of their days in the land of karb wa balāʾ (difficulty and hardship). However, what led to their physical suffering in the desert heat of Iraq ironically led to Ḥurr's spiritual rise and success. A seed planted decades before of the love of Sayyidah Fāṭimah az-Zahrāʾ (ʿa) was the trigger for Ḥurr's spiritual reformation. It would take many years after it had been sown, and the result is witnessed on the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ.

His full name was Al-Ḥurr b. Yazīd al-Rīyaḥī. His role in the battle of Karbala is unparalleled—he was a general of Yazīd's army from Syria, sent on a mission to prevent Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) from meeting the people of Kufa. He was not only able to stop the Imām from completing his mission, but General Ḥurr further cut off their access to the Euphrates River, leading to the thirst of the Holy Household (ʿa). This led to fatigue and exhaustion in Imām Ḥusayn's (ʿa) army, the death of his infant son, and the feebleness of the household, including Imām Ḥusayn's (ʿa) son and heir to the Imāmah, Imām ʿAlī as-Sajjād b. Ḥusayn (ʿa).

Though Ḥurr was doing his job and merely following orders from Damascus,

his discomfort started to grow as the days of Muḥarram dragged on. Upon seeing the army of Yazīd intensify their efforts to increase the suffering of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and prepare for an outright crushing of the rebellion, Ḥurr felt something awaken inside him. It is at this point that we see that Ḥurr himself represents what is at the essence and core of every human being: the battle between good and evil, ego and Allah, Heaven and Hell. In fact, Ḥurr's growing discomfort with the battle to come between his own army and the opposing one is similar to what we often experience in our lives. Do we please others, or do we please Allah? Do we do what we want or what Allah wants? It is too often that we find ourselves between the two armies of truth and falsehood, ḥaqq and bāṭil, as Ḥurr did.

As the days neared the tenth of Muḥarram, the orders from Damascus were finalized: the small revolt led by Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) was to be crushed completely. The men were to be killed in battle and the women to be taken captive. Ḥurr did not expect the situation to escalate to this level; after all, Imām Ḥusayn's (ʿa) camp was not a threat to the tens of thousands of soldiers that had gathered on the side of Yazīd. With a handful of companions and his family, however, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) prepared for what was to come. It was at this point that Ḥurr's internal conflict began to unravel, revealing the intricacies of his soul that make up our human souls too: constant oscillation between good and bad.

On the afternoon of the ninth of Muḥarram, Ḥurr looked to another general in the army, ʿUmar ibn Saʿd, who would later be responsible for the gruesome martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). He asked him, "Will we really fight this Ḥusayn? Is there no path for resolution or peace?" ʿUmar ibn Saʿd, with his eyes and heart set on the promised reward for Imām Ḥusayn's (ʿa) beheading, answered in the negative.
The night before the battle was to begin, the inner struggle of Ḥurr continued. In deep contemplation, Ḥurr made his famous statement, *"I find myself between Hell and Heaven…"*

The following day, after he recited the morning prayers, Ḥurr made his choice. It was the bounty of the Noble Prophet (ṣ) that Ḥurr looked for—the afterlife and promised eternal salvation of being in Allah's pleasure. The promises of booty from this world paled in comparison to what would come.

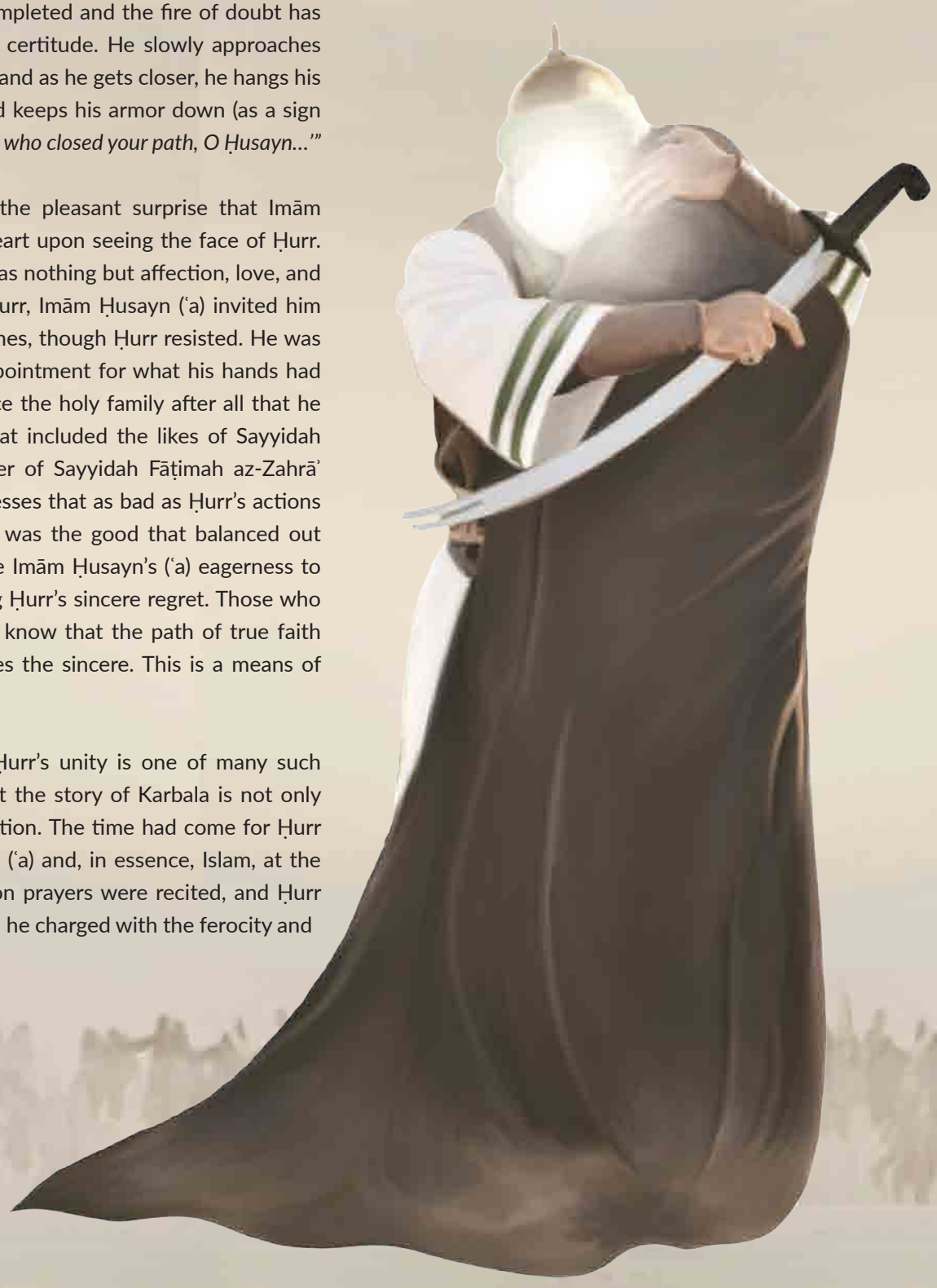
*It is at this point that we see that Ḥurr himself represents what is at the essence and core of every human being: the battle between good and evil, ego and Allah, Heaven and Hell. In fact, Ḥurr's growing discomfort with the battle to come between his own army and the opposing one is similar to what we often experience in our lives. Do we please others, or do we please Allah? Do we do what we want or what Allah wants? It is too often that we find ourselves between the two armies of truth and falsehood, ḥaqq and bāṭil, as Ḥurr did.*

## *Ḥurr, a Twist in Fate continued:*

And so, history narrates that Ḥurr bravely defected from his army. Nonetheless, upon heading toward the camp of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), the strength he once had as a general and warrior left his body. He was penitent and hung his head, dragging his feet reluctantly as he walked his horse towards the camp. Ultimately, it was his fault that Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) now faced imminent death and the threat to his household's dignity. Dr. Ali Shariati says poetically, "The creation of Ḥurr was completed and the fire of doubt has led him to the verity of certitude. He slowly approaches the camp of Ḥusayn (ʿa), and as he gets closer, he hangs his boots from his neck, and keeps his armor down (as a sign of remorse). *'I am the one who closed your path, O Ḥusayn…'"*

One can only imagine the pleasant surprise that Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) had in his heart upon seeing the face of Ḥurr. But, on his face, there was nothing but affection, love, and warmth. Upon seeing Ḥurr, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) invited him into his camp several times, though Ḥurr resisted. He was full of shame and disappointment for what his hands had sown. How could he face the holy family after all that he had done, the family that included the likes of Sayyidah Zaynab (ʿa), the daughter of Sayyidah Fāṭimah az-Zahrāʾ (ʿa)? Yet, the world witnesses that as bad as Ḥurr's actions were, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) was the good that balanced out this equation. We notice Imām Ḥusayn's (ʿa) eagerness to accept Ḥurr upon seeing Ḥurr's sincere regret. Those who understand his reaction know that the path of true faith wholeheartedly embraces the sincere. This is a means of hope for us.

Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and Ḥurr's unity is one of many such examples in Karbala, but the story of Karbala is not only of unity, but also separation. The time had come for Ḥurr to defend Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and, in essence, Islam, at the front lines. The afternoon prayers were recited, and Ḥurr was ready to go forward; he charged with the ferocity and



force of a warrior fighting for the cause of truth. While fighting in battle, Ḥurr begins to announce himself and his intentions:
*"I am Hurr! I am standing* in the presence of my guest who is the most noble to step upon this land! I will defend this noble man."

It was after fighting bravely and dispatching many of the enemy's soldiers that Ḥurr was overtaken and embraced his martyrdom. It is at that moment that Sayyidah Fāṭimah az-Zahrāʾ (ʿa) responded to Ḥurr's remorse on the morning of ʿĀshūrāʾ. In Ḥurr's last moments, as Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) took Ḥurr's head onto his lap, tying the handkerchief of Sayyidah Fāṭimah az-Zahrāʾ (ʿa) on his bleeding forehead, it was as if Sayyidah Fāṭimah az-Zahrāʾ (ʿa) herself had accepted his sacrifice. Upon his martyrdom, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) declared Ḥurr truly free in both this world and the Hereafter, as his mother had named him Ḥurr, which means freedom in Arabic. The general had indeed died as a soldier of war, but this time, for the side of good and justice, earning Allah's eternal jubilation and provisions. In the Noble Qurʿān, Allah says:
*"Do not consider those who are slain for the cause of God to be dead. They are alive [receiving sustenance] but you are unaware of them."* (2:154)

It becomes clear through the words of Allah that Ḥurr's story has become one as old as eternity itself. It is repeated every year during the annual commemoration of the tragedy of Karbala and recounted with inspiration, hope, and motivation for all to hear. Allah has indeed provided him with eternal sustenance. The story of Ḥurr has become infinite, not limited to time or space. Ḥurr represents the human ability to see right and wrong and rise to the challenge for truth that surpasses worldly desires and aims. In the beginning, and in the end, Ḥurr's story is the same as our story. May we choose the side of truth not only in our defining moments of life, but even in the seemingly insignificant ones.



# Qūnut Corner

وَمَا كَانَ قَوْلَهُمْ إِلَّا أَن قَالُوا رَبَّنَا
اغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَإِسْرَافَنَا فِي أَمْرِنَا
وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ
الْكَافِرِينَ

3:147

*Wa mā kāna qawlahum illā an qālū rabbanagh-fīr lanā dhunūbanā wa isrāfanā fī amrinā wa thabbit aqdāmanā wan-ṣurnā ʿalāl-qawmil-kāfirīn*

And their words were not but that they said, "Our Lord, forgive us our sins and the excess [committed] in our affairs and plant firmly our feet and give us victory over the disbelieving people.

# Riddle Me This

1. Leave me, and you will never find the treasure. Use me, and you will attain Allah's pleasure. What am I?

2. When you use me wrongly you can't undo your mistake. So, use me well, or at least try. Now tell me, who am I?

3. This is a tricky one. Who was the warner who was neither human nor jinn, and who warned his people and is mentioned in the Qurʿān?

4. I am one of the longest surviving human beings whom death Allah has saved me from. I am over 2000 years old and still healthy, strong, and breathing. Who am I?

5. We are not tongues, nor have the power to speak, yet we will speak one day as witnesses over your deeds. Who are we?

# Word Find

L I N Q U X D Z O M C O S U F H U S A B
X F Z W J I I A T G U J A U O Y H R M I
D Z G V L G X W N T N U Y L T A U I B T
M A T L A R M M G D Z D Y S M H P C D U
I D J P C K E D T C M H I C S E J A T N
T H T J B P M H N M O J D A F F D E G Z
Y C J E A N Y A S U H M A M I Z E I P L
O S L P F S V G S A T W H N K I A D N T
M T B M G D M E H E J N Z H Z T L H E A
D H N V L T H A D G T L A S B X A U G S
Y X T X R O Y Y M J B Q Y T A N B R K B
C G O W L F O Z X I K J N P Z N R R E W
L X B D K U H X E T V E A R J R A Q M O
A R B A I N M L Z T G L B J U Q K T Z I
G S U Z H V C I L C S S Y Q Z M F N N J

| | |
|---|---|
| Ashura | ImamSajjad |
| Arbain | Karbala |
| Hurr | Medina |
| HolyHousehold | SayyidahZaynab |
| ImamHusayn | Sham |

**ANSWERS:** 1. The Noble Qur'ān, 2. The tongue, 3. The ant (Sūrah an-Naml), 4. Prophet ʿĪsā (ʿa), 5. Hands and legs: "On the Day when their tongues, their hands, and their legs or feet will bear witness against them as to what they used to do." (The Noble Qur'ān, 24:24)

# Next Issue...

Spiritual Self Building

Allah's Mercy to Mankind

Islam's Golden Age

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# Transliteration Guide

Arabic terms in this booklet have been transliterated according to the following guidelines:

| | |
|---|---|
| ء | a, i, or u (initial form) |
| ء | ʾ (medial or final form) |
| ا | a |
| ب | b |
| ت | t |
| ث | th |
| ج | j |
| ح | ḥ |
| خ | j |
| د | d |
| ذ | dh |
| ر | r |
| ز | z |
| س | s |
| ش | sh |
| ص | ṣ |
| ض | ḍ |
| ط | ṭ |
| ظ | ẓ |
| ع | ʿ |
| غ | gh |
| ف | f |
| ق | q |
| ك | k |
| ل | l |
| م | m |
| ن | n |
| ه | h |
| و | w |
| ي | y |
| ة | h (without iḍāfah) |
| ة | t (with iḍāfah) |
| ـَـ | a |
| ـِـ | i |
| ـُـ | u |



# Arabic Glossary

**Adhān:**
The call to prayer

**al-Fātiḥah:**
The first sūrah of the Qurʾān

**Rakʿah:**
One unit of prayer

**Fajr:**
The obligatory morning prayer

**Ẓuhr:**
The obligatory noon prayer

**ʿAsr:**
The obligatory late noon prayer

**Maghrib:**
The obligatory evening prayer

**ʿIshāʾ:**
The obligatory night prayer

And your Lord says,

"And he who has done an atom's weight of good shall see it."

Noble Qur'ān, 99:7